

May 26, 2019 Worship and Prayer for Robert and Julie Isaiah 25:6-10 Luke 9:28-36 Psalm 121

It seems Reconciliation has a special gift of expression. A gift Robert has encouraged through prayer and worship because contemplation comes in so many forms. By opening up the liturgy, and allowing it to breathe, it better reflects who we are today. By bringing back Second Sundays he understands the power of our stories, and the healing in both the telling and hearing.

For me personally, it was the second or third visit to Rec that landed us in the middle of the Season of Creation. A new ministry Robert brought to Reconciliation and I knew immediately I was being invited to a place already in my heart.

To hear about the book of creation in such an honest manner was refreshing, a little shocking and yet so obvious. Outside of Blessing of the Animals, I have never attended a service that honored the Good Earth. Yet it is said Creation is the first incarnation of the Christ. Genesis, the step by step making of the atmosphere and skies, the night and the day, the land and animals and us. It is the story where God spoke everything into existence, all that there is, and revealed himself through creation because it is good not to be alone.

Our annual trip to Big Bend is an undefined pilgrimage, we just go. It is part of the original sanctuary, the Big Book, Robert calls it, where a variety of Reconcilers join together. Without handouts, or bibles, without PowerPoint, or even a schedule. We let the spirit do its work. Little groups take off in different directions, to hike a trail, look through the famous Window, stand on the Rim of volcanic forces, or send out an echo in the canyons. Some jump in the hot springs, ride a burrow on the other side, some take a nap or read or draw. The only request? Bring your favorite beverage and a food item to the Friday night cookout - to share. A wide variety of food shows up from salty to the sweet which allows for much grazing from table to table. And this is when we are treated to a famous Chisos Basin sunset.

Whatever we experienced individually during the day comes together in one Spirit. With the warm light reflecting from our faces, we are able to see each other differently, pointing at the drama of the dazzling colors before us, banded together, we try to capture it as long as we can. And then it's gone. Inevitably after dinner some of us cannot help but turn our gaze to the heavens to serenade the moon or pick through the array of diamonds in the sky. We've come to understand we are blessed just to be. To be alive, to be with each other. In Creation, there is a Covenant, of contemplation and worship with the Christ that allows the Lord to remove the shroud that separates us and be saved.

For a guy who does not talk very much Robert sure has said a lot, in a humble manner. His tear filled eyes speak deeply. In the three years of listening to Robert's homilies, there are two very clear messages. Love and act in love. Be kind and maybe even courageous.

If I may go out on a limb here, I believe Robert's commission to us was given in his last Easter Sunday homily. Wherein, he expanded the definition of the word "credo" to believe in each other and to give of ourselves. He declared we are brothers and sisters and urged us to connect, support and serve one another.....because sometimes it is good not to be alone. He also stated he did not know of a church who did this better than Reconciliation.

Robert has challenged us, yes repeatedly to stretch, to not be afraid and to open up. By saying yes to many new forms of worship, he has allowed the reflection of God to come to us in new ways. By including ministries which make us uncomfortable help us to get real with each other. We will continue to find ways to let go of fear and hold up hope to each other, our families and neighbors and the world.

Robert, ever the Good Shepard leading us, at times cajoling us to bring all that we are (good and bad), reminding us not to be afraid, pointing us up the mountain to be transformed. To see the Christ in yourself and in each other. *This is the Way.*

When you sit in the original sanctuary called Creation, she has a way of holding you steady when you feel a drift, reminding you of where you came from when you are lost, wiping away some of the anxiety, grief, or self-doubt for a while. This is the gift of the Christ in Creation. That is, to be surrounded and enfolded, just as you are.

On this weekend of Remembrance, and the unofficial beginning of summer
If you are feeling a tug to enter into nature's sanctuaries; or if you have forgotten or are lost and burdened Robert has helped us to remember the way.....to your favorite beach, open field, breezy lake, mountain side, local park or backyard. Go and maybe take somebody with you.

And so with profound thanks to you both....

Praise be to God!